

What is claimed is:

1. A method for processing an electronic request to purchase goods or services, the method comprising:

receiving electronic purchasing information from a shopper via a communications network, the purchasing information containing an electronic request to purchase goods or services and notification information, the notification information representative of at least one communication pathway for communicating with the shopper;

recognizing the occurrence of a triggering event that affects the performance of the electronic request; and

notifying the shopper that the triggering event has occurred via the at least one communication pathway.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

creating a shopper profile associated with the shopper, the shopper profile containing the electronic request and the notification information associated with the shopper; and

accessing the notification information in the shopper profile.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving notification information comprises receiving at least one of an email address, a telephone number and a pager number.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving notification information comprises receiving presence information.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the notification information is representative of a plurality of communication pathways, each pathway having a preferred rank.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the communications network is the Internet.

7. A computer having instructions thereon for processing an electronic request to purchase goods or services, the instructions performing the steps comprising:
- receiving electronic purchasing information from a shopper via a communications network, the purchasing information containing an electronic request to purchase goods or services and notification information, the notification information representative of at least one communication pathway for communicating with the shopper;
  - recognizing the occurrence of a triggering event that affects the performance of the electronic request; and
  - notifying the shopper that the triggering event has occurred via the at least one communication pathway.
8. The computer of claim 7 further comprising:
- creating a shopper profile associated with the shopper, the shopper profile containing the electronic request and the notification information associated with the shopper; and
  - accessing the notification information in the shopper profile.
9. The computer of claim 7, wherein receiving notification information comprises receiving at least one of an email address, a telephone number and a pager number.
10. The computer of claim 7, wherein receiving notification information comprises receiving presence information.
11. The computer of claim 7, wherein the notification information is representative of a plurality of communication pathways, each pathway having a preferred rank.
12. A server computer for processing an electronic request to purchase goods or services from a shopper, the server comprising:
- a communications interface connected to a communications network for establishing a communications link between the server and a host client computer;

a processing engine in communication with the communications interface for receiving purchasing information from the shopper via the host client computer and the communications network, the purchasing information containing an electronic request to purchase goods or services; and notification information representative of at least one communication pathway for communicating with the shopper and for recognizing the occurrence of a triggering event that affects the performance of the electronic request.

13. The server system of claim 12 further comprising:
  - a data storage facility in communication with the processing engine that contains data representing the notification information.
14. The server system of claim 13 wherein the data storage facility further contains:
  - a shopper profile associated with the shopper and containing the electronic request and the notification information associated with the shopper.
15. The server system of claim 12 further comprising:
  - a message routing agent adapted to receive notification information.